

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application as amended respectfully is solicited on behalf of the Applicants.

With the present response, 14 claims have been cancelled, 13 claims have been amended, and 13 claims have been re-presented in order to materially advance the status of the present prosecution.

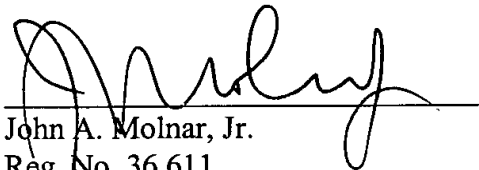
It is noted with appreciation that claims 2, 3, 7-10, 13-15, 18, 19, 25, 26, and 28-32 have been objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be considered allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitation of the base claim and any intervening claims.

With the present response, claim 1, the sole original independent claim, along with dependent claims 2, 3, 7-10, 13, 15, 18, 25, and 28-30, have been cancelled. The cancelled dependent claims are re-presented in independent form as, respectively, new claims 66-78. The dependencies of claims 14, 19, 26, 31, and 32 have been changed from, respectively, 13 to 72, 18 to 74, 25 to 75, 29 to 77, and 30 to 78.

The dependencies of claims 4, 5, 11, 12, 16, 17, 20, and 22 have been changed from claim 1 to new claim 72. Claim 4 also have been amended to correct an informality.

The issuance of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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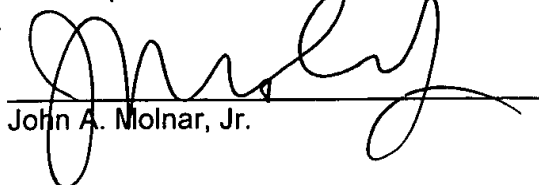
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CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this correspondence is being deposited on March 31, 2004, with the United Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to: Commissioner for Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450.



John A. Molnar, Jr.